



# THE POWER BEYOND THE PHYSIQUE: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF PAULO COELHO'S NOVEL THE ALCHEMIST

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## ABSTRACT

Paulo Coelho shows the readers a different face of nature through his novel *The Alchemist*. He draws a clear picture of an ancient Spain desert life and explores the universal strength of nature. Sacrificing a girl's life for a man, makes him the luckiest man. There is a famous quote from the novel by The Alchemist, "*Where your treasure is, there also will be your heart.*" (pg. 151) So here we see that Santiago is in love with Fatima and his heart is always with her, so we can say that the treasure is Fatima itself. Now Fatima has become a synonym for the treasure, although he finds the treasure in the end of the novel, he acquired the most important things in his life, the treasure. The universe is full of secrets and only one who sets his journey in search of it is going to find it. Santiago was carried out by the dreams that were conspired by the whole universe. So we can say that Santiago was a basic man who would be chasing out his dreams when one would be encouraged for it. We even tend to believe that each and every activity of man is monitored by the power of the universe and all the good deed are supported by all means and that's what we can call the power beyond the physique.

**KEYWORDS:** Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*, Universal Strength, Power of Nature, Chasing Dreams, Desert Life

Paulo Coelho shows the readers a different face of nature through his novel *The Alchemist*. He draws a clear picture of an ancient Spain desert life and explores the universal strength of nature. He portrays the life of a shepherd boy and also of typical characters seen in a desert and how they are led by the secret hands of nature to their destinies. He brings a clear picture of the desert culture and traditions. It gives the readers an idea of how a shepherd boy goes through his lifetime of happiness and sorrow. It's just an example and Santiago is a universal character who represents any normal human being. When viewed in a religious and spiritual way we can interpret that the treasure is the afterlife or heaven and it is a journey of life till his death. It is a type of mystic journey that influence one man's spiritual and eternal life. Paulo Coelho being a spiritual writer, who deals with spirituality and religion, mainly focus on the spiritual and internal development of an individual.

The central theme of the novel is that whenever man tries to achieve something in his life, he is destined to have it. The basic universal law of love and compassion blended with magical realism makes it more appealing. The main two characters Santiago and Fatima are united in the story, they are called as soul mates in the novel by the author. Here the truth of love and possession is glorified. Here, Fatima as the soul mate of Santiago encouraged him throughout the journey to achieve the destiny. Their commitment to each other paves way for their actual victory.

At the backdrop we see the power of nature. Apart from the constant influence of desert in Santiago's life, the novel attracts the attention of readers towards the significance of the oasis, oasis is depicted as an area of wealth and prosperity in the desert. Fatima comes from the oasis of Al-Fayoum, here Fatima is considered to be a girl who is waiting for her lover, this is also an example of true love, but possessiveness is confused by love for Santiago, but he clarified his doubts and led a path which was showed by the alchemist. Afterwards in the progression of the story the role of Fatima becomes an inevitable character apart from the other roles played in the story. When we take a view on the thoughts of Santiago which is totally immersed in Fatima, the thoughts were transformed in such a way that at last her soul and Santiago's soul got united in between the story, which he described as Fatima residing in his heart. So, in the concluding lines we can say that Santiago along with Fatima conquered the treasure; it can be related as the treasure of their life.

Santiago can be taken as a role model to all men, and he is considered as a universal character towards the end. If Fatima was just a lover and nothing more than that, it would have been impossible for Santiago to find his treasure; therefore Fatima truly can be considered as the best partner for Santiago in his whole life journey, and also the apt female protagonist for this novel. The strength of Fatima helps Santiago to be consistent in his search for the treasure. Fatima is the epitome of true love, she is celebrated for her passion and sacrifice, and this is very rare in today's world as no one is ready to sacrifice anything for others. When looking through religious lenses we can say that the partner is appointed by the God for his lifetime. All destinies are present in an atmosphere where there is an air of love and waiting. Here, Fatima acts as the aura that surrounds Santiago and his dream.

Man gets assistance or support from nature for achieving his desire, and according to the Alchemist she was appointed by the universe for him to conspire it. One

of the biggest theories of the world is that a girl's love can bring success in a boy's life, this is the alchemy of love and success, for this universal theory the novel *The Alchemist* is a true example.

The crucial and unseen role of Fatima as a partner of Santiago is unveiled. The characteristic features she possesses in order to find the treasure is unappreciated in the story. In the advancement of the story the girl named Fatima become the center of concern and energy for the boy to go through his hurdles and finally find his treasure. Here the significance of treasure can be seen as two in one perspective it is the wealth and materialistic possession, in the second perspective it is the achievement of manhood after reaching his destiny, he attains maturity and wisdom. The other perspective is that the treasure can be considered as Fatima. It can be said Fatima played a role of a treasure which lead to the real treasure. This can be related to the contemporary world, one always finds many treasures on the way of their journey, with love only one can move forward with all his will to find his true destiny.

"*He had already seen many Castles and met many women (but none the equal of the one who awaited him several days hence).*" (pg. 9). The line in brackets gives the hint to the girl who was going to wait for him. "*I have been waiting for you here in the oasis for a long time. Ever since I was a child, I have dreamed that the desert would bring me a wonderful present. Now, my present has arrived, and it's you.*" (pg. 92) From these lines it can be understood that she was waiting for him till she met him. After their meeting she again waited for him, when he went to the pyramids. "*the child said to me, 'if you come here, you will find a hidden treasure. And, just as she was about to show me the exact location, I woke up, both times.'*" (pg. 13) Here we can read that it was a girl, the author have very wisely used 'she' instead of 'he'. This opens to the second clue towards Fatima, the 'she' used in these lines very vaguely resembles Fatima, the novelist could have used a 'he' or 'child' their but instead using 'she's' he clearly want to give a very indirect hidden role of Fatima in finding treasure. This would add to the point that it was Fatima who directed him towards the treasure.

There is the Concept of 'Soul of the world' discussed with high importance by the author. "*Soul of the world is the principal that governs all things, 'that's the principle that governs all things,' he said. 'In alchemy, it's called the soul of the world. When you want something with all your heart, that's when you are closest to the soul of the world. It's always a positive force.'*" According to this statement Santiago wanted two things with all his heart, one was his treasure and the other was Fatima. Next was the meeting with Fatima, at that moment Santiago realized the true language of the World. Till that time he was in a quest to learn the language of the World, after seeing Fatima he understood that the language of the World was love, the language that everyone on earth was capable of understanding. "*When you want something with all your heart, that's when you are closest to the soul of the world. It's always a positive force.*" It was said throughout the book that one who understands the language of the World can definitely find his destiny, for Fatima's character is glorified when she supports Santiago to achieve what he longs for. She was defined by her beauty and willingness to wait for Santiago, while he was pursuing his Personal Legend. Fatima is the woman who in all terms redirected Santiago for continuing on his quest to find treasure at the Pyramids. He and Fatima find true love, and Santiago nearly decides to abandon his personal legend in order to stay with Fatima at the Oasis. He is told that he could stay in the Oasis with Fatima and live a fulfilling and comfortable life. However,

it would mean losing the gift of reading omens and the fulfillment of his personal legend. Fatima was surprisingly alright with this. She told Santiago that as a woman of the desert, she would wait for his return. Her role here is to show us that love should not stand in the way of fulfilling one's personal legend, that true love is unconditional and supportive in all matter. As far as physical descriptions are concerned, Fatima is described as a beautiful being with dark eyes and features which the people of the desert think to be the features of a beautiful woman.

Santiago realizes that the true learning happens with the experiences of life with nature. It cannot be derived from books, but it must come from the world, from the universe. Having abandoned the books, Santiago began to recognize signs in nature that have meaning for him: this is the Language of the World. The universe began clearly to direct the boy's path. When a person really desires something, all the universe conspires to help that person to realize his dream. "And when you want something, the entire universe conspires in helping you to achieve it." (pg.25)

Only one who learns and listens to the Language of the World can realize his or her Personal Legend. Fatima understood this. She knew that if Santiago has to return to her, it would happen, if that was his Personal Legend. She already knew the signs of the desert, the Language of the World. So she lets him go. As the universe conspires to help Santiago realize his dream—his Personal Legend—he faced many hardships, but also learned truths paramount to finding happiness in his life. He recognized the power he had by being one with nature; he understood that pursuing one's Personal Legend is what brings real treasure.

The Language of the World led him to Fatima in the first place; it draws him a way to finish the search for his dream. Ultimately, it directed him back to the oasis, to Fatima. Santiago finally recognized that Fatima is his treasure, not something he dreamed, which was buried in Egypt. And while his original dream eventually came to a reality, it was secondary to the love he had discovered in his journey in a woman he was going to marry. The Language of the World represents "oneness." This is what Santiago and Fatima discovered in each other. And it is through this language that they find each other. The reader finds it again at the end, even though a great distance separates the two. The wind began to blow again...it brought the scent of a perfume he knew well, and the touch of a kiss...that came from far away. This is the Language of the World that is drawing them together once more, as he has done before Santiago left the grazing fields with his sheep. "*You have told me about your dreams about the old king and your treasure. And you have told me about omens that brought you me. And I am a part of your dream, a part of your destiny, as you call it.*" (pg. 93). This shows that Fatima has become a part of his journey and now she is the part of his dream called destiny.

Fatima has become a partner in finding the Treasure so through this analysis we come to a conclusion that she also has participated in the hunt for treasure. Santiago alone didn't find treasure, even though he was never physically accompanied by Fatima to accomplish it. "*You told me that you loved me. Then, you taught me something of the universal language and the soul of the world. Because of that, I have become a part of you.*" (pg. 92) This shows that Santiago's and Fatima's soul got united and then she had become a part of him, their hearts got united, so we can interpret in such a way that Santiago was led by Fatima to the treasure and he discovered the treasure along with Fatima. This is what is trying to be proved in this chapter, that Santiago along with Fatima found the treasure. When their soul got united the entire universe was with them to conquer the treasure. So this proves the theory that love can do wonders and miracles. Something that was found to be difficult would become possible with true love. The waiting on Fatima also should be celebrated in this novel as she waits for him throughout his journey.

The dunes of the desert got changed by the wind, but the desert never changed. That's the way it would be with Santiago's and Fatima's love, it is never going to change till their death. He wanted peace to pursue his destiny. He found the peace in the desert and also in the eyes of Fatima he found peace. The oasis was as quiet as the desert. Fatima was a girl from the oasis and therefore she was a provider of peace for Santiago.

Sacrificing a girl's life for a man, makes him the luckiest man. There is a famous quote from the novel by *The Alchemist*, "*Where your treasure is, there also will be your heart.*" (pg. 151) So here we see that Santiago is in love with Fatima and his heart is always with her, so we can say that the treasure is Fatima herself. Now Fatima has become a synonym for the treasure, although he finds the treasure in the end of the novel, he acquired the most important things in his life, the treasure. The universe is full of secrets and only one who sets his journey in search of it is going to find it. Santiago was carried out by the dreams that were conspired by the whole universe. So we can say that Santiago was a basic man who would be chasing out his dreams when one would be encouraged for it. We even tend to believe that each and every activity of man is monitored by the power of the universe and all the good deed are supported by all means and that's what we can call the power beyond the physique.

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